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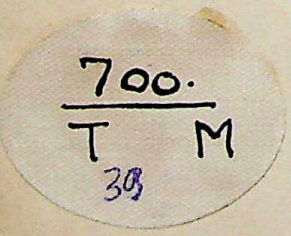
THE MEANING OF ART

Rabindranath Tagore



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The Meaning of Art

by

Rabindranath Tagore

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Preface

At the time of the Centenary Celebrations for Rabindranath Tagore, a collection of his writings on Art and Aesthetics were brought out. Somehow, the essay *The Meaning of Art* was not included, perhaps because it had originally appeared in English Language in the *Visvabharati* in 1921 and had been forgotten. My attention was drawn to it by the English critic, W.G. Archer, who quoted from it two significant paragraphs in his book *India and Modern Art.*

I reproduce the sensational words here :

"When in the name of Indian art we cultivate, with deliberate aggressiveness, a certain bigotry born of the habit of a past generation, we smother our souls under indiosyncrasies unearthed from buried centuries. These are like masks with exaggerated grimaces, that fail to respond to the ever-changing play of life." "I strongly urge our artists vehemently to deny their obligation carefully to produce something that can be labelled as Indian art according to some old world mannerism. Let them proudly refuse to be herded into a pen like branded beasts that are treated as cattle and not as cows."

These sentences were written by Tagore towards the end of his life, just about the time when he had begun to make his proof corrections into doodles, scribbles, fantasies and primitivist paintings, which approximated to the work of some of the *avant garde* modern artists of the West.

And the 'sensational' thing about them is this: the poet of lyrical harmony who, in his *Sahitya*

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lectures, delivered before the National Council of Education, had considered Beauty to be *Brahmasvadasahodara*, the flavour of the Absolute *Brahman*, or Supreme God; who had, moreover, backed the revivalist trend in Indian art which was led by his nephew, Abanindranath Tagore, now enlarged his perspective and included even the socalled 'ugly' in his sense of 'Beauty'.

In his plays, and his novels, he had, indeed, foreshadowed the change of outlook and adaptation to the modernism (and sincerity) by accepting tragedy, which had no place in the Classical Sanskrit literature, where the Gods decided, the fate of human beings ultimately, and the Gods being sublime *Bliss* could not admit of an unhappy ending.

But the acceptance of these cular humanist approach came to the aesthete, who believed in 'Beauty' as 'Harmony', much later, when the love of dark passions, sublimenal desires and fantasies of the unconscious burst from the 'Volcano', as he came to be called, in his old age.

I feel that this important essay shows the organic development of Rabindranath Tagore's aesthetic and might be made available to a larger number of artists and art lovers, so that the inspiration of his courage can come to many of those who still believe in reviving the dead past of our heritage whether it may have relevance for us or not.

The struggle between the believers in the old myth of *Brahman* as Rasa, and the new myth of contemporary Man who may discover the flavours in his individual sensibility, will go on in our

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multicultural society as long as our orthodox philosophers faild the absorption of the new experimental attitudes.

In this struggle the pertinacity of instinct with which Tagore defined the confusion and pointed out the direction of advance towards absorption of new experiences, new visions and fresh insights, becomes highly important.

Let me quote some more words from *The Meaning of Art* on this theme:

'....When we talk of such a fact as Indian art, it indicates some truth based upon the Indian tradition and temperament. At the same time we must know that there is no such thing as absolute caste restriction in human cultures; they have even the power to continue and produce new variations, and such combinations have been going on for ages, proving the truth of the deep unity of human psychology....fortunately for our civilisations all such intermingling happened when professional art critics were not rampant and artists were not constantly nudged by the warning elbow of classifiers in their choice of inspiration. Our artists were never tiresomely reminded of the obvious fact that they were Indians: and in consequence they had the freedom to be naturally Indian in spite of all the borrowings that they indulged in'.

The authority of Tagore is necessary as a kind of sanction as we enter the experimental age in Indian art activity.

Mulk Raj Anand

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There is a remarkable verse in the Atharva Veda which attributes all that is great in the human world to superfluity. It says:

Ritam Satyam tapo rashtram sramo dharmascha karmacha, Bhutam bhavishyat ucchiste viryam lakshmirbalam bale.

Righteousness, Truth, great endeavours

(Righteousness, truth, great endeavours, empire, religion, enterprise, heroism and prosperity, the past and the future dwell in the surpassing strength of the surplus.)

The meaning of it is that man expresses himself through his super-abundance which largely overlaps his absolute need.

The renowned vedic commentator, Sayanacharya, says:

Yajne, hutasishtasya, odanasya sarvajagatkaranabhuta Brahmabhedena stutih kriyate

(The food offering which is left over after the completion of sacrificial rites is praised because it is symbolical of Brahma, the original source of the universe.)

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According to this explanation, Brahma is boundless in his superfluity, which inevitably finds its expression in the eternal world process. Here we have the doctrine of the genesis of creation and therefore of the origin of art. Of all living creatures in the world man has his vital and mental energy vastly in excess of his need, which urges him to work in various lines of creation for its own sake. Like Brahma himself, he takes joy in productions that are unnecessary to him and therefore representing his extravagance and not his hand-to-mouth penury, but which is abundant. The voice that is just enough can speak and cry to the extent needed for everyday use, sings, and in it we find our joy. Art reveals man's wealth of life, which seeks its freedom in forms of perfection, which are an end in themselves.

Brahma as creator of Arts

Art, freedom and perfection

All that is inert and inanimate is limited to the bare fact of existence. Life is perpetually creative because it contains in itself that surplus which ever overflows the boundaries of the immediate time and space, restlessly pursuing its adventure of expression in the varied forms of self-realisation. Our living body has its vital organs that are important in maintaining its efficiency, but this body is not a mere convenient sac for the purpose of holding stomach, heart, lungs and brains; it is an image, its highest value is in the fact that it communicates its personality. It has colour, shape and movement, most of which belong to the superfluous, that are needed only for self-expression and not for self-preservation.

The adventure of expression and self-realisation

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At the root of all creation there is a paradox, a logical contradiction. Its process is in the perpetual reconciliation of two contrary forces. We have already said that the natural urging of the surplus, the ucchista, is the motive force of all that makes for perfection. But the boundless overflow must yield to the bounds of finitude for its manifestation. Truth must become real by the definition of the infinite. We have two contradictory utterances in the *Upanishads* about the origin of all things. On the one hand, it has been said :

Our living body has vital organs

Anandadhyeva khalvimani bhutani yayante.

(The Universe has come out of joy).
On the other hand, there is the verse which says:

Sa tapo tapyatah sa tapastaptva sarvamasrijat yadidam kincha.

(God made penance, and with the heat generated therefrom he created all that there is).

The freedom of joy and the restraint of *tapasya*, both are equally true in the creative expression of Brahma.

This limitation of the unlimited is personality: God is personal where he creates.

Kavirmanishi paribhuh svayambhuryatatathyato' rthan Vyadadhat shaswatibhyah samabhyah.

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(Where he dispenses the inner necessities of existence in an accurate measure and for all time he is the poet, the lord of mind, the sovereign power, the self-creator).

The world of reality belongs to art

He accepts the limits of his own law, and the play goes on, which is this world whose reality is in its relation to the person. Things are distinct not in their essence but in their appearance, in other words, in their relation to one to whom they appear. This is art, the truth of which is not in substance or logic but in expression. Abstract truth may belong to science and metaphysics, but the world of reality belongs to art.

2

The world as an art is the play of the Supreme Person revelling in image making. Try to find out the ingredients of the image—they elude you, they never reveal to you the eternal secret of appearance. In your effort to capture life, as expressed in living tissue, you will find carbon, nitrogen and many other things utterly unlike life. but never life itself. The appearance does not offer any commentary of itself through its material. You may call it Maya and pretend to disbelieve it, but the great artist, the Mayavin, is not hurt. For art is Maya, it has no other explanation but that it seems to be what it is. It never tries to conceal its evasiveness, it mocks even its own definition and plays the game of hide and seek through its constant flight in changes.

Art is Maya

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And thus life, which is an incessant explosion of freedom finds its metre in a continual falling back in death, every day is a death, every moment even. If not, there would be an amorphous desert of deathlessness eternally dumb and still. So life is maya, as moralists love to say, it is and is not. All that we find in it is the rhythm through which it shows itself. Are rocks and minerals any better? Has not science shown us the fact that the ultimate difference between one element and another is only that of rhythm? The fundamental distinction of gold from mercury lies merely in the difference of rhythm in their respective atomic constitution, like the distinction of the king from his subject, which is not in their different constituents but in the different metres of their situation and circumstance. There you find behind the scene the Artist, the Magician of rhythm, who imparts an appearance of substance to the unsubstantial.

Artist as magician of rhythm

What is this rhythm? It is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction. This is the creative force in the hand of artist. So long as words remain in uncadenced prose form, they do not give any lasting feeling of reality. The moment they are taken and put into rhythm they vibrate into a radiance. It is the same with the rose. In the pulp of its petals you may find everything that went to make the rose, but the rose which is maya, an image, is lost; its finality which has the touch of the infinite is gone. The rose appears

What is rhythm?

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to me of movement within that stillness, which is the same as the dynamic quality of a picture that has a perfect harmony. It produces a music in our consciousness by giving it as swing of motion synchronous with its own. Had the picture consisted of a disharmonious aggregate of colours and lines, it would be deadly still.

In perfect rhythm, the art-form becomes like the stars, which, in their seeming stillness, are never still, like a motionless flame that is nothing but movement. A great picture is always speaking, but news from a newspaper, even of some tragic happening, is still-born. Some news may be a mere commonplace in the obscurity of a journal; but give it a proper rhythm and it will never cease to shine. That is art. It has the magic wand which gives undying reality to all things it touches, and relates them to the personal being in us. We stand before its productions and say: I know you as I know myself, you are real.

A great picture always speaks

3

Let me repeat here my remark about the function of art from a previous paper of mine: 'when we talk of aesthetics in relation to arts, we must know that it is not about beauty in its ordinary meaning but in that deeper meaning which a poet has expressed in his utterance: truth is beauty, beauty truth. An artist may paint a picture of a decrepit person not pleasing to the eye, and yet we call it perfect when we become deeply conscious of its reality.'

Tragedy can delight us

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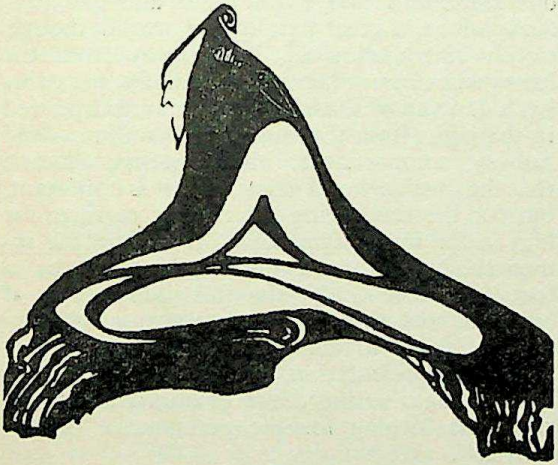

Hopeless tragedies of life can never technically be called beautiful, but when appearing on the background of art, they delight us because of the convincingness of their reality. It only proves that every object which fully asserts its existence to us because of its inherent finality, is beautiful; it is what is called in Sanskrit *Manohara*, the stealer of the mind, the mind which stands between the knower and the known. We have our primal sympathy for all things that exist, for when realised they stimulate the consciousness of our own existence. The fact that we exist has its truth in the fact that everything else does exist.

The I am in me realises its own extension, its own infinity whenever it truly realises something else. Unfortunately, owing to

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our limitations and a thousand and one pre-occupations, a great part of our world, though closely surrounding us, is far away from the lamp-post of our attention; it is dim, it passes us by, a caravan of shadows, like the landscape seen in the night from the window of an illuminated railway compartment: the passenger knows that the outside world exists, that it is important, but for the time being the railway carriage for him is far more significant. If among the innumerable objects in this world there be a few that come under the full illumination of our soul and thus assume reality for us, they constantly cry to our creative mind for a permanent representation. They belong to the same domain as the desire of ours which represents the longing for the permanence of our own self.

Longing for the permanance of our self

I do not mean to say that things to which we are bound by the tie of self-interest have the inspiration of reality: on the contrary these are eclipsed by the shadow of our own self. The servant is not more real to us than the beloved. The narrow emphasis of utility diverts our attention from the complete man to the merely useful man. The thick label of market price obliterates the ultimate value of reality. It has been said in the *Vrihad-Aranyaka* :

The desire for the son does not make him dear, the son is dear for the sake of the self.

That is to say, in the son the father becomes conscious of a reality which is immediately and profoundly within him. He is delighted

Delight in Art— its own absolute value

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not because his son is perfect and beautiful, but because his son is indubitably real to him, our joy, as I have said before, being the disinterested perception of the real. This is the source of our delight in all arts and literature, where reality is presented to us on the pedestal of its own absolute value.

All the deep impressions in our mind are accompanied by some emotions which set up by their own variety of tremors in our consciousness. This agitation modulates our voice and movements and impels us to all creative display of colours, forms and sounds. This reminds me of the occasion when I saw inscribed on the wall of a school building in exaggerated characters: "Bipin is an egregious ass". It amused me and at the same time offered me an answer to the question, what is art.

Bipin is an egregious Ass

No one takes the least trouble to proclaim the information that Bipin is tall or that he suffers from a cold. Ordinarily our mind is soberly grey in its impression of Bipin. But when we love him or hate him, the fact of Bipin's existence becomes glowingly evident on the agitated background of passion. Then our mind can no longer remain neutral; it detaches the idea of Bipin from the immense multitude of what is non-significant to us, and according to its own power our mind tries to make him as unavoidably real to others as he is to ourselves. The boy who angrily longed to give permanence to his indignant estimate of Bipin

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and make it universally accepted had nothing but his inadequate charcoal and ineffectual training whereas his forefathers of the primitive age, when excited to anger not only could give vent to it effectively in action, but also in an expression of gorgeous ferocity by the help of pigments, feathers, tinsel and war dance. That writing on the school wall, craving immortality, sadly begged for colours and rhythmic lines to be like its glorious conveners, the fresco paintings of the world renowned caves, where the artists attempted to emphasise their estimate of certain personalities, and of sundry incidents, into permanence.

4

As art creations are emotional representations of facts and ideas they can never be like the product of a photographic camera, which is passively receptive of lights and shadows in all their indiscriminate details. Our scientific mind is unbiased: it accepts facts with a cold-blooded curiosity that has no preference. The artistic mind is strongly biased, and that bias not only guides it in its fastidious selection of the subject, but also in that of its details. It throws coloured lights of emphasis on its theme in such a manner that it attains a character which clearly distinguishes it from its fellows. The skylarks of science offer corroboration of their truth through their similarity, the skylarks of artists and poets through their dissimilarity. If Shelley's poem on this bird were just like that of Wordsworth, it should have been rejected for its lack of truth. As art embodies

The artistic mind is strongly biased

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our personal estimate of a thing, or character, or circumstance, the artist in his work does not follow nature's capacious heterogeneity, but his own human nature which is selective. By leaving out whatever is non-essential for his own purpose of expression and intensifying what is significant, he brings out the truth of his creation much more vividly that he would if he copied actuality which is strictly impartial to whatever exists. The wholeness of God's creation is immensely vast and it is not possible for any details to be too defiantly discrepant in its relation to it. But the background of human expression is small and therefore it is never possible to accommodate nature's details in our art compositions. It is childish to expect the primaeval forest in the perspective of our garden plot, or an illustration of natural history in our works which modulate fact to the tune of our personality.

Art compositions cannot accommodate nature's details

5

Once the question had been asked to me as to the place I assigned to music in my theory of art. I am bound to answer it, and I take this opportunity to offer my explanation.

Music is the most abstract of all arts, as mathematics is in the region of science. In fact, these two have a deep relationship with each other. Mathematics as the logic of number and dimension is the basis of our scientific knowledge. When taken out of it concrete associations with cosmic phenomena and reduced to symbols it reveals its grand structural

Music is the most abstract of all arts

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majesty, the inevitableness of its own perfect concord. But there is also such a thing as the magic of mathematics which works at the root of all appearances, producing harmony of unity, the cadence of inter-relation of the parts bringing them under the dominion of the whole. This rhythm of harmony has been extracted from its usual context and exhibited through the medium of sound. And thus the pure essence of expressiveness in existence is offered in music. In sound it finds the least resistance and has a freedom unencumbered by the burden of facts and thoughts. It gives it a power to arouse in us an intense feeling of reality; it seems to lead us into the soul of all things and make us feel the very breath of inspiration flowing from the supreme creative joy.

Music and Mathematics

In the pictorial, plastic, verbal arts, the object and our feelings with regard to it are closely associated, like the rose and its perfume. In music the feeling, extracted in sound, becomes itself an independent object. It assumes a tune—form which is definite but a meaning which is indefinable and yet grips our mind with a sense of absolute truth.

There came a time, centuries ago, in Bengal, when the divine love drama, that had its play in human souls, was vividly revealed by an eternal personality radiating its intimate realisation of God. The mind of a whole people was stirred by the vision of the world as an instrument through which sounded our invitation to the meeting of bliss. The ineffable mystery

Kirtan music

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of God's love call taking shape in an endless panorama of colours and forms, finding its chorus in the symphony of human affections, inspired activity in a music that overflowed the restrictions of classical conventionalism. Our kirtan music in Bengal came to its being like a star flung up by a burning whirlpool of emotion in the heart of a whole people.

6

There come in our history occasions when the consciousness of a large multitude becomes suddenly illuminated with the recognition of something which rises far above the triviality of daily happenings. Such an occasion there was when the voice of Buddha reached distanct shores across all physical and moral impediments. Then our life and our world found their profound meaning of reality in their relation to the central person who offered us emancipation of love. And men, in order to make this great human experience ever memorable, determined to do the impossible; they made rocks to speak, stones to sing, caves to remember, the cry of joy and hope took immortal forms along hills and deserts, across barren solitudes and populous cities. A gigantic creative endeavour built up its triumph in stupendous carvings, defying obstacles that were overwhelming. Such heroic activity over the greater part of the Eastern continent clearly answers the question: What is art? It is the response of man's creative soul to the call of the real. But the individual mind according to its temperament and training has its own

The gigantic creative endeavour in the carvings

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recognition of reality in some of its special aspects. We can see from the Gandhara figures of the Buddha that the artistic influence of Greece put its emphasis on the scientific aspect, on anatomical accuracy, while the purely Indian mind dwelt on the symbolic aspect and tried to give expression to the soul of Buddha, never acknowledging the limitations of realism. For the adventurous spirit of the great European sculptor, Rodin and the most significant aspect of reality is the unceasing struggle of the incomplete for its freedom from the fetters of imperfection, where as before the naturally introspective mind of the Eastern artist the real appears in its ideal form of fulfilment.

7

Therefore, when we talk of such a fact as Indian Art, it indicates some truth based upon the Indian tradition and temperament. At the same time we must know that there is no such thing as absolute caste restriction in human cultures; they ever have the power to combine and produce new variations, and such combinations have been going on for ages, proving the truth of the deep unity of human psychology. It is admitted that in Indian art the Persian element found no obstacles, and there are signs of various other alien influences. China and Japan have no hesitation in acknowledging their debt to India in their artistic and spiritual growth of life. Fortunately for our civilisation all such intermingling happened when professional art critics were not rampant and artists were not constantly nudged by the warn-

No caste system in human cultures

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ing elbow of classifiers in their choice of inspiration. Our artists were never tiresomely reminded of the obvious fact that they were Indian and in consequence they had the freedom to be naturally Indian in spite of all the borrowings that they indulged in.

The sign of greatness in great geniuses is their enormous capacity for borrowing very often without their knowing it; they have unlimited credit in the world market of culture. Only mediocrities are ashamed and afraid of borrowing. for they do not know how to pay back the debt in their own coin. Even the most foolish of critics does not dare blame Shakespeare for what he openly appropriated from outside his own national inheritance. The human soul is proud of its comprehensive sensitiveness, it claims its freedom of entry everywhere when it is fully alive and awake. We congratulate ourselves on the fact, and consider it a sign of our being alive in soul, that European thoughts and literary forms found immediate hospitality in Bengali literature from the very beginning of its contact with our mind. It ushered in a great revolution in the realm of our literary expression.

Capacity for borrowing of genius

Enormous changes have taken place, but our Indian soul has survived the shock and has vigorously thriven upon this cataclysm. It only shows that though human mentality, like the earth's atmosphere, has undoubtedly different temperatures in different geographical

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zones, yet it is not walled up into impassable compartments and the circulation of the common air over the entire globe continues to have its wholesome effect. So let us take heart and make daring experiments, venture out into the open road in the face of all risks, go through experiences in the great world of human mind defying unholy prohibitions preached by prudent little critics, laughing at them when in their tender solicitude for our safety they ask our artists to behave like good children and never to cross the threshold of their school-room.

Fearfully trying always to conform to a conventional type is a sign of immaturity. Only

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in babies is individuality of physiognomy blurred, and therefore personal distinction not strongly marked. Childishness is a mentality that can easily be generalised: children's babbling has the same sound-tottering everywhere, their toys are very nearly similar. But adult age is difficult of classification, it is composed of individuals, who claim recognition of their personal individuality which is shown not only in its own uniqueness of manner but also in its own special response to all stimulations from outside. I strongly urge our artists vehemently to deny their obligation carefully to produce something that can be labelled as Indian art according to some old world mannerism. Let them proudly refuse to be herded into a pen like branded beasts that are treated as cattle and not as cows. Science is impersonal, it has its one aspect which is merely universal and therefore abstract; but art is personal and, therefore, through it the universal manifests itself in the guise of the individual, physiology expresses itself in physiognomy, philology in literature. Science is a passenger in a railway train of generalisation; there reasoning minds from all directions come to make their journey together in a similar conveyance. Art is a solitary pedestrian, who walks alone among the multitude, continually assimilating various experiences, unclassifiable and uncatalogued. There was a time when human races lived in comparative segregation and therefore the art adventurers had their experience within a narrow range of limits, deeply-cut grooves of certain common characteristics. But today that range has vastly widened, claiming from us a much

To conform to convention is a sign of immaturity

I strongly urge our artists to deny just anything that can be labelled as Indian Art

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greater power of receptivity than what we were compelled to cultivate in former ages. If today we have a living soul that is sensitive to ideas and to beauty of form, let it prove its capacity by accepting all that is worthy of acceptance, not according to some blind injunction of custom or fashion, but in following one's instinct for eternal value, the instinct which is a God given gift to all real artists. Even then our art is sure to have a quality which is Indian, but it must be an inner quality and not an artificially fostered formalism, and therefore not be too obtrusively obvious and abnormally self-conscious.

The world is a close-knit family

When in the name of Indian art we cultivate with deliberate aggressiveness a certain bigotry born of the habit of a past generation, we smother our souls under idiosyncracies unearthed from buried centuries. These are like masks with exaggerated grimaces, that fail to respond to the ever changing play of life.

We smother our souls under idiosyncracies from buried centuries

Art is not a gorgeous sculpture immovably brooding over a lonely eternity of vanished years. It belongs to the procession of life, making constant adjustment with surprises, exploring unknown shrines of reality along its path of pilgrimage to a future which is as different from the past as the tree from the seed. Art represents the inexhaustible magnificence of creative spirit. It is generous in its acceptance and generous in its bestowal; it is unique in its manner and universal in its appeal; it is hospitable to the all because it has the wealth which is its own; its vision is new though its

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view may be old. It carries its special criterion of excellence within itself and therefore contemptuously refuses to be browbeaten into conformity with a rhetoric manufactured by those who are not in the secret of the subtle mysteries of creation, who want to simplify through their academic code of law that which is absolutely simple through its spontaneity.

The art ideal of a people may take fixed root in a narrow soil of tradition developing a vegetable character, producing a monotonous type of leaves and flowers in a continuous round of repetitions. Because it is not disturbed by a mind which ever seeks the unattained and because it is held firm by a habit which piously discourages allurements of all adventures, it is neither helped by the growing life of the people nor does it help to enrich that life. It remains confined to coteries of specialists who nourish it with delicate attention and feel proud of the ancient flavour of its aristocratic exclusiveness. It is not a stream that flows through and fertilises the soil, but a rare wine stored in a dark cellar underground, acquiring a special stimulation through its artificiality nurtured, barren antiquity. In exchange for a freedom of movement which is that prerogative of rigorous youth, we may gain a static perfection of senility that has minted its wisdom into hard and rounded maxims. Unfortunately, there are those who believe it an advantage for a child to be able to borrow its grandparent's age and be spared the trouble and risk of growing, and think that it is a sign of wealthy respectability for an artist lazily to cultivate a monotonously

Art as tradition does not help to enrich life

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easy success by means of some hoarded patrimony of tradition. And yet we may go too far if we altogether reject tradition in the cultivation of art, and it is an incomplete statement of truth to say that habits have the sole effect of deadening our mind. The tradition which is helpful is like a channel that helps the current to flow. It is open where the water runs onward, guarding it only where there is danger in deviation. The bee's life in its channel of habit has no opening: it revolves within a narrow circle of perfection. Man's life has time-honoured institutions which are its organised habits. When these act as enclosures, then the result may be perfect, like a bee-hive of wonderful precision of form, but unsuitable for the mind which has unlimited posibilities of progress.

Tradition which is helpful makes the current to flow

8

Before I close my essay let me take this opportunity to ask our artists to realise the greatness of their vocation: it is to take a creative part in the festival of life, the festival which is to give expression to the infinite in man. In our everyday world we live in poverty; our resources have to be husbanded with care; our strength becomes exhausted and we come to our God as beggars. On festival days, we display our wealth and say to Him that we are even as He is; and we are not afraid to spend. This is the day when we bring to Him with our offerings and not our wants, and such offerings need Art for its vehicle.

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I need have no anxiety about the great world to which I have been born. The sun does not wait to be trimmed by me. But from the early morning all my thoughts are occupied by the little world of myself. Its importance is owing to the fact that I have a world given to me which is mine, which depends for its perfection on my own creative soul. It is great because I have the power to make it worthy of its relationship with me, it is great, because by its help I can offer my own hospitality to the God of all the world.

In the morning, the sun comes out brightly, in the dusk the stars hold up their lights. But these are not sufficient for us. Until we light our own little lamps, the world of lights in the sky is in vain and unless we make our own preparation, the wealth of the world preparation remains waiting like a lute for the finger touch. But preparation is going on all the world over, beginning with the age of the cave man down to our time. Man the artist is inviting God the artist to his home. God dwells in his own creation and it is expected of man that he also must create his environment, his own dwelling place, which should be worthy of his soul. For a perfect creation the artist in him must have his freedom, the artist whose one object is perfection and not profit, who has the dignity of pride that despises material success and the heroism that pursues the ideal of inner fulfilment against difficulty, discouragement and privation. And then his world gives a true

Preparation going on all over the world

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response to God's world, like the sweetness in woman in answer to the greatness of her lover.

It is for the artist to remind the world that with the truth of our expression we grow in truth. When the man-made world is less an expression of man's creative soul than a mechanical device for some purpose of power, then it hardens itself, acquiring proficiency at the cost of the subtle suggestiveness of living growth. In his creative activities man makes nature instinct with his own life and love. But with his utilitarian energies he fights nature, banishes her from his world, deforms and defiles her with the ugliness of his ambitions. This world of man's own manufacture, with its discordant shreiks and swagger, impresses on him the scheme of a universe which has no touch of the person and therefore no ultimate significance. All the great civilisations that have become extinct must have come to their end through such wrong expression of humanity; through parasitism on a gigantic scale bred by wealth, by man's clinging reliance on material resources; through a scoffing spirit of denial of negation, robbing us of our means of sustenance in the path of truth.

In his creative activities man makes nature instinct with his own life and love

It is for the artist to proclaim his faith in the everlasting YES—to say: 'I believe that there is an ideal hovering over and permeating the earth, and ideal of that Paradise which is not the mere outcome of fancy, but the ultimate reality in which all things dwell and move!!

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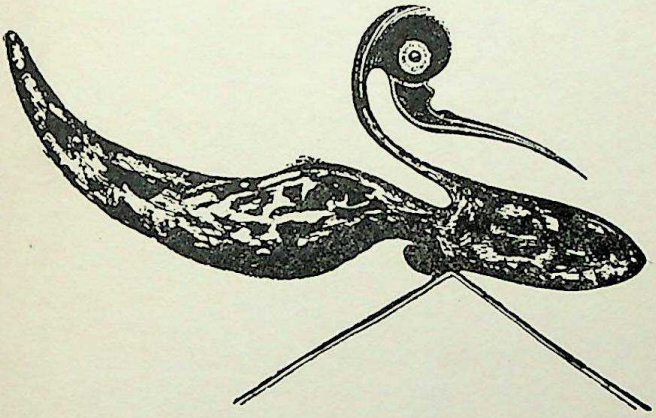

I believe that this vision of Paradise is to be seen in the sunlight and the green of the earth in the beauty of the human face and the wealth of human life, even in objects that are seemingly insignificant and unprepossessing. Everywhere in this earth the spirit of Paradise is awake and sending forth its voice. It reaches our inner ear without our knowing it. It tunes our harp of life which sends our aspiration in music beyond the finite, not only in prayers and hopes, but also in temples which are flames of fire in stone, in pictures which are dreams made everlasting, in the dance which is ecstatic meditation in the still centre of movement.

Vision of Paradise

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